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Barrie, James Matthew

Sir James M. Barrie's challenge to youth

[Boston?]

[1922?]

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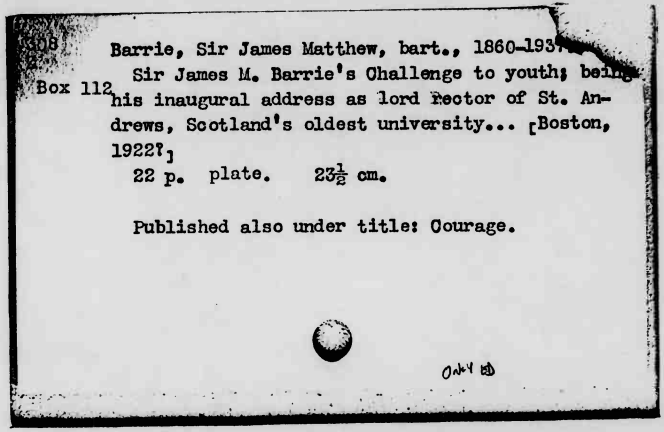
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SIR JAMES M. BARRIE'S

Challenge to Youth

Being His Inaugural Address as Lord Rector of St. Andrews, Scotland's Oldest University

Compliments of the

BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT

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BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT

SIR JAMES M. BARRIE'S Inaugural Address was delivered on May 3, 1922. On the same occasion Earl Haig, Field Marshal of England, was made Lord Chancellor, and Ellen Terry, the actress, was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws

Sir James Barrie and Miss Ellen Terry

Barrie's Challenge to Youth

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—Even in those two words I see what a change has come over the Scottish Universities since my days. There were no girl undergraduates then. Ladies, you add to my terrors today, but I congratulate and applaud you on winning your scarlet gowns. When Lord Haig was speaking I was remembering, as I dare say you all were, other days, when it was not as chancellor that we thought of him, days when he used a phrase about our having our backs to the wall—which is where I feel my back is at this moment. I once thought of trying to address you on the theme "If there had been no war," but a grimmer text would be "If there had been no Haig." Among the changes, you might have had a rector at St. Andrews with a German accent. Lord Haig is a man of Fife. As you say, he might have done worse. Yet some of your queer ways and words in Fife rather amuse us in Forfarshire. The first favor I must ask of you is to be lenient if you don't hear me. I am not accustomed to speaking, and just now I hear my own voice with a horrible resonance, like a peal of bells in an empty house. But I have a suspicion that the noise does not travel, and that, when all is over, my rectorial address may still remain a secret. I shall do my utmost, but I can assure those of you who don't hear me that you are having much the best of it just now.

December Roses

No one could be more conscious of the honor you have done me. You have had many rectors here who will shine on after the likes of myself are dead and rotten and forgotten. They are the roses in December. You remember that someone said that God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December. But I don't envy the great ones. In my experience, and you may find in the end it is yours also, the people I have cared for most and who have seemed most worth caring for—my December roses—have been very simple folk. But I wish that for this hour that I could swell into someone of importance, so as to do you credit. I suppose you had a softening for me because I was hewn out of one of your own quarries, walked similar academic groves, and have

trudged the road on which you will soon set forth. I would that I could put into your hands a staff for that somewhat bloody march. There is much about myself that I conceal from other people, but to help you I would expose every cranny of my mind.

But alas, when the hour comes for the rector to answer to his call he is unable to enter into the undergraduate he used to be, and so the only door into you is closed. We, your elders, are much more interested in you than you are in us. We are not really important to you—I have utterly forgotten the address of the rector of my time, and even who he was, but I recall vividly climbing up a statue to tie his colors round its neck and being hurled therefrom with contumely. We remember the important things. I cannot provide you with that staff for your journey. But perhaps I can tell you a little about it, how to use it and lose it and find it again and cling to it more than ever. You shall cut it —so it is ordained—everyone of you for himself, and its name is Courage. You must excuse me if I talk a good deal about courage to you today. There is nothing else much worth speaking about to undergraduates or graduates or white-haired men and women. It is the lovely virtue—the rib of Himself that God sent down to His children.

They Were the Big Guns

My special difficulty is that though you have had literary rectors here before, they were the big guns, the historians, the philosophers; you have had none, I think, who followed my more humble branch, which may be described as playing hide-and-seek with angels. My puppets seem more real to me than myself. I could get on much more swingingly if I made one of them deliver this address. It is McConnachie who has brought me to this pass. McConnachie, I should explain, is the name I give to the unruly half of myself—the writing half. We are complement and supplement. I am the half that is dour and practical and canny, he is the fanciful half; my desire is to be the family solicitor, standing firm on my hearthrug among the harsh realities of the office furniture, while he prefers to fly around on one wing. I shouldn't mind him doing that, but he drags me with him. I have sworn that McConnachie shall not interfere with this address today. But there is no telling. I might have done things worth while if it had not been for McConnachie. My first piece of advice to you at any rate shall be sound. Don't copy me. A good subject for a rectorial address would be the mess the

rector himself has made of life. I merely cast this forth as a suggestion, and leave the working of it out to my successor. I don't think it has been used yet.

Youth's Claim

My own theme is Courage, as you should use it in the great fight that seems to me to be coming between Youth and their Betters; by Youth meaning of course you, and by your Betters us. I want you to take up this position—that Youth have for too long left exclusively in our hands the decisions in national matters that are more vital to them than to us. Things about the next war, for instance, and why the last one ever had a beginning. That the time has arrived for Youth to demand a partnership. That to gain courage is what you come to St. Andrews for. With some alarms and excursions into college life. That is what I propose, but of course the issue lies with McConnachie.

Your Betters had no share in the immediate cause of the war—we know what nation has that blot to wipe out; but for fifty years or so we heeded not the rumblings of the distant drum—I don't mean by lack of military preparations—and when war did come, we told Youth, who had to get us out of it, tall tales of what it really is and the clover beds it would lead to. We were not meaning to deceive, most of us were as honorable and as ignorant as the Youth themselves; but that does not acquit us of stupidity and jealousy, the two black spots in human nature which, more than love of money, are at the root of all evil. If you prefer to leave things as they are we shall probably fail you again. Don't be too sure that we have learned our lesson and are not at this very moment doddering down some brimstone path.

I am far from implying that even worse things than war may not come to a State. There are circumstances in which nothing can so well become a land, as I think this land proved when the late war did break out, and there was but one thing to do. There is a form of anæmia that is more rotting than even an unjust war. The end will indeed have come to our courage, and to us, when we are afraid in dire mischances to refer the final appeal to the arbitrament of arms. I suppose all the lusty of our race, alive and dead, join hands on that.

Fighters' Rights

But if you must be in the struggle, the more reason you should know why, before it begins, and have a say in the decision whether it is

to begin. The youth who went to the war had no such knowledge, no such say; I am sure the survivors, of whom there may be some here today, want you to be wiser than they were, and are certainly determined to be wiser next time themselves. Perhaps the seemly thing would be for us, their Betters, to elect one of them to be our rector. He ought now to know a few things about war that are worth our hearing. If his theme were the rectors' favorite, Diligence, I should be afraid of his advising us to be diligent in sitting still and doing no more harm.

Of course he would put it more suavely than that—though it is not, I think, by gentleness that you will get your rights; we are dogged ones at sticking to what we have got, and so will you be at our age. But don't call us ugly names; we may be stubborn and we may be blunderers, but we love you more than aught else in the world. I urge you not to use ugly names about anyone. In the war it was not the fighting men who were distinguished for abuse; as has been well said, "Hell hath no fury like a non-combatant." Never ascribe to an opponent motives meaner than your own. There may be students here today who have decided this session to go in for immortality, but would like to know of an easy way of accomplishing it. That is a way—but not so easy as you think. Go through life without ever ascribing to your opponents motives meaner than your own. Nothing so lowers the moral currency. Give it up, and be great.

A Sure Way to Fame

Another sure way to fame is to know what you mean. It is a solemn thought that almost no one—if he is truly eminent—knows what he means. Look at the great ones of the earth, the politicians. We don't discuss what they say, but what they may have meant when they said it. In 1922 we are all wondering, and so are they, what they meant in 1914 and afterwards. They are publishing books trying to find out, the men of action as well as the men of words. There are exceptions. It is not that they are "sugared mouths with minds therefrae"; many of them are the best men we have got. The explanation seems just to be that it is so difficult to know what you mean, especially when you have become a swell. Those doubts breed suspicions, a dangerous air. Without suspicion there might have been no war. When you are called to Downing street to discuss what you want of your Betters with the prime minister

he won't be suspicious—not as far as you can see; but remember the atmosphere of generations you are in, and when he passes you the toast rack say to yourselves: "Now, I wonder what he meant by that?"

Distrust of Age

Even without striking out in the way I suggest, you are already disturbing your Betters considerably. I sometimes talk this over with McConnachie, with whom, as you may guess, circumstances compel me to pass a good deal of my time. In our talks we agree that we, your Betters, constantly find you forgetting that we are your Betters. Your answer is that the war and other happenings have shown you that age is not necessarily another name for sapience—that our avoidance of frankness in life and in the arts is often but a cowardly way of shirking unpalatable truths; and that you have taken us off our pedestals because we look more natural on the ground. "If Youth but only knew," we used to teach you to sing; but now, just because Youth has been to the war, it wants to change the next line into "If Age had only to do."

This passive attitude of distrust, however, will not help you or our country much, unless it stirs you into getting to know how world-shaking situations arise, how they may be checked, and in what way to obtain the fighting partner's share in the decisions. Doubt all your Betters who would deny you that right. Begin by doubting all in high places—except, of course, your professors. But doubt all other professors. If it necessitates your pushing us out of our places, still push; you will find it needs some shoving. But the things courage can do! The things that even incompetency can do if it works with singleness of purpose. Your Betters have done a big thing; we have taken spring out of the year. And having done that our leading people are amazed to find that the other seasons are not conducting themselves as usual. The spring of the year lies buried in the fields of France and elsewhere. By the time the next eruption comes it may be you who are responsible for it, and your sons who are in the lava. All perhaps because this year you let things slide.

Back Into the Old Grooves

We are a nice and kindly people, but it is already evident that we are struggling back into the old grooves. We are too old for any others; that is the fundamental difference between us and you. We have no

intention of giving you your share. Look around and see how much share Youth has now that the war is over. You got a handsome share while it lasted.

I expect we shall beat you; unless your fortitude be doubly girded by a desire to send a message of cheer to your brothers who fell—the only message, I believe, for which they crave; they are not worrying about their Aunt Jane. They want to know if you have learned from what befell them; if you have, they will be braced in the feeling that they did not die in vain. Some of them think they did. They won't take our word for it that they didn't. You are their living image; they know you could not lie to them, but they distrust our flattery and our cunning faces. To us they have passed away; but are you who stepped into their heritage only yesterday, whose books are scarcely cold to their hands, you who still hear their cries being blown across the link—are you already relegating them to the shades? The gaps they have left in this university are among the most honorable of her wounds. But we are not here to acclaim them. Where they are now, hero is, I think, a very little word. They call to you to find out in time the truth about this great game, which your elders play for stakes and Youth for its life.

An Unfinished Play

I don't know whether you are grown a little tired of that word hero, but I am sure the heroes are. That is the subject of one of our unfinished plays. McConnachie is the one who writes the plays. If any one of you here proposes to be a playwright you can take this for your own and finish it. The scene is a school, schoolmasters present; but if you like you could make it a university, professors present. Glasburgh or Abergow. They are discussing an illuminated scroll about a student fallen in the war, which they have kindly presented to his parents, and unexpectedly the parents enter. They are an old pair, backbent, they have been stalwarts in their day but have now gone small; poor, but not so poor that they could not send their boy to college. They are in black, not such a rusty black either, and you may be sure she is the one who knows what to do with his hat. Their faces are gnarled, I suppose—but I don't need to describe that pair to Scottish students. They have come to thank the Senatus for their lovely scroll and ask them to tear it up. At first they had been

enamored to read of what a scholar their son had been, how noble and adored by all. But soon a fog settled over them, for this grand person was not the boy they knew. He had many a fault well-known to them; he was not always so noble; as a scholar he did no more than scrape through. And he sometimes made his father rage and his mother grieve. They had liked to talk such memories as those together and smile over them, as if they were bits of him he had left lying about the house. So thank you kindly, and would you please give them back their boy by tearing up the scroll? I see nothing else for our dramatist to do. I think he should ask an alumna of St. Andrews to play the old lady. The loveliest of all young actresses, the dearest of all old ones—it seems only yesterday that all the men of imagination proposed to their beloveds in some such frenzied words as these, "As I can't get Miss Terry, may I have you?"

Need League of Youth

This play might become historical as the opening of your propaganda in the proposed campaign. How to make a practical advance? The League of Nations is a very fine thing, but it can't save you, because it will be run by us. Beware your Betters bringing presents. What is wanted is something run by yourselves. You have more in common with the youth of other lands than Youth and Age can ever have with each other; even the hostile countries sent out many a son very like ours, from the same sort of homes, the same sort of universities, with the same sort of hearts, who had as little to do as our Youth had with the origin of the great Adventure. Can we doubt that many of these on both sides who have gone over, and were once opponents, are now friends. You ought to have a League of Youth as your great practical beginning. I sound to myself as if I were advocating a rebellion. Perhaps I may be arrested on leaving the hall. In such a cause I should think that I had at last proved myself worthy to be your rector.

You will have to work harder than ever, but possibly not so much at the same things—more at modern languages certainly—if you are to discuss that League of Youth with the students of other nations when they come over to St. Andrews for the conference. I am far from taking a side against the Classics. I should as soon argue against your having tops to your heads—that way lie the best tops. Science, too, has

at last come to its own in St. Andrews. It is the surest means of teaching you how to know what you mean when you say. So you will have to work harder. One of the most valiant men that ever trod St. Andrews, Dr. Johnson, said that doubtless the Almighty could have created a finer fruit than the strawberry, but that doubtless also He never did. Doubtless also He could have provided us with better fun than hard work, but I don't know what it is.

The Glory of Not Knowing a Soul

To be born poor is probably the next best thing. The greatest glory that has ever come to me was to be swallowed up in London, not knowing a soul, with no means of subsistence, and the fun of working till the stars went out. To have known anyone would have spoilt it. I didn't even quite know the language. I rang for my boots and they thought I said a glass of water, so I drank the water and worked on. There was no food in the cupboard, so I didn't need to waste time in eating. The pangs and agonies when no proof came. How courteously tolerant was I of the postman without a proof for us; how McConnachie on the other hand wanted to punch his head. The magic days when our article appeared in an evening paper. The promptitude with which I counted the lines to see how much we should get for it. Then McConnachie's superb air of dropping it into the gutter.

But now—on reflection—a dreadful sinking assails me: that this was not really work. The artistic callings—you remember how Stevenson showed them up—are merely doing what you are clamorous to be at; it isn't real work unless you would rather be doing something else. My so-called labors were just McConnachie running away with me again. Still, I have sometimes worked; for instance, I feel that I am working at this moment. And the big guns are in the same plight as the little ones. Carlyle, the king of all rectors, has always been accepted as the arch-apostle of toil, and has registered his many woes. But it won't do. Despite sickness, poortith, want and all, he was footing it all his life at the one job he revelled in. An extraordinarily happy man, though there is no direct proof that he thought so.

Work and Joy

There must be many men in other callings besides the arts, lauded as hard workers who are merely out for enjoyment. Our Chancellor? If

our Chancellor had always a passion to be a soldier, we must reconsider him as a worker. Even our Principal? How about the light that burns in our Principal's room after decent people have gone to bed? If we could climb up and look in—I should like to do something of that nature for the last time—should we find him engaged in honest toil or guiltily engrossed in chemicals?

You will all fall into one of those two callings, the joyous or the uncongenial, and one wishes you into the first, though our sympathy, our esteem, must go rather to the less fortunate, the braver ones who "turn their necessity to glorious gain" after they have put away their dreams. To the others will go the easy prizes of life—success, which has become a somewhat odious onion now-a-days, chiefly because we so often give the name to the wrong thing. When you reach the evening of your days you will, I think, realize—with, I hope, becoming cheerfulness—that we are all failures, at least all the best of us. The greatest Scotsman that ever lived wrote himself down a failure:

> The poor inhabitant below
> Was quick to learn and wise to know.
> And keenly felt the friendly glow
> And softer flame.
> But thoughtless follies laid him low
> And stained his name.

Perhaps the saddest lines in poetry, written by a man who could make things new for the gods themselves.

If you want to avoid being like Burns there are several possible ways. Thus you might copy us, as we shine forth in our published memoirs, practically without a flaw. No one so obscure nowadays but that he can have a book about him. Happy the land that can produce such subjects for the pen.

Your Autobiography

But don't put your photograph at all ages into your autobiography. That is the tragic mistake. "My Life; and What I Have Done With It." That is the sort of title, but it is the photographs that give away what you have done with it. Grim things these portraits; if you could read the language of them you would often find it unnecessary to read the book. The face itself, of course, is still more tell-tale. It is the record of all one's past life. There the man stands in the dock, page by page; we ought to be able to see each chapter of him melting into the next, like

the figures in the cinematograph. Even the youngest of you has got through some chapters already. When you go home for the next vacation some one is sure to say: "John has changed a little; I don't quite see in what way, but he has changed." You remember they said that last vacation. Perhaps it means that you look more manly, I hope it does; at any rate, try to make that its meaning next time.

A Chair for Reading Faces

In youth, you tend to look rather frequently into a mirror, not at all necessarily from vanity. You say to yourself, "What an interesting face; I wonder what he is to be up to?" Your Betters don't look into the mirror so often. We know what he has been up to. As yet there is unfortunately no science of reading other people's faces. I think a chair for this should be founded in St. Andrews.

That professor will need to be a sublime philosopher, and for obvious reasons he ought perhaps to wear spectacles before his senior class. It will be a gloriously optimistic chair, for he can tell his students the glowing truth that what their faces are to be like presently depends mainly on themselves. Mainly, not altogether—

I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

I found the other day an old letter from Henley that told me of the circumstances in which he wrote that poem. "I was a patient," he writes, "in the old infirmary of Edinburgh. I had heard vaguely of Lister, and went there as a sort of forlorn hope on the chance of saving my foot. The great surgeon received me, as he did and does everybody, with the greatest kindness; and for twenty months I lay in one or another ward of the old place under his care. It was a desperate business, but he saved my foot, and here I am!" There he was, ladies and gentlemen, and what he was doing in that infirmary was singing that he was master of his fate.

Tribute to Hardy

If you want an example of courage try Henley. Or Stevenson. I could tell you some stories about these two, but they would not be dull enough for a rectorial address. For courage again take Meredith, whose laugh was "as broad as a thousand beeves at pasture." Take, as I

think, the greatest figure literature has still left to us, to be added today to the roll of St. Andrews alumni, though it must be in absence. The pomp and circumstance of war will pass, and all others now alive may fade from the scene, but I think the quiet figure of Hardy will live on.

I seem to be taking all my samples from the calling I was lately pretending to despise. I should like to read you some passages of a letter from a man of another calling, which I think will hearten you. I have the little filmy sheets here. I thought you might like to see the actual letter; it has been a long journey, it has been to the South Pole. It is a letter to me from Captain Scott of the Antarctic, and was written in the tent you know of, where it was found long afterwards with his body and those of some other very gallant gentlemen, his comrades. The writing is in pencil, still quite clear, though toward the end some of the words trail away as into the great silence that was waiting for them. It begins:

Captain Scott's Letter

"We are pegging out in a very comfortless spot—Hoping this letter may be found and sent to you, I write you a word of farewell. I want you to think well of me and my end." After some private instruction too intimate to read he goes on: "Good-bye—I am not at all afraid of the end, but sad to miss many a simple pleasure which I had planned for the future in our long marches. . . . We are in a desperate state, feet frozen, etc., no fuel and a long way from food, but it would do your heart good to be in our tent to hear our songs and our cheery conversation. . . . Later"—it is here that the words become difficult—"We are very near the end. . . . We did intend to finish ourselves when things proved like this, but we have decided to die naturally without."

I think it may uplift you all to stand for a moment by that tent and listen, as he says, to their songs and cheery conversation. When I think of Scott, I remember the strange Alpine story of the youth who fell down a glacier and was lost, and of how a scientific companion, one of several who accompanied him, all young, computed that the body would again appear at a certain date and place many years afterwards. When that time came round some of the survivors returned to the glacier to see if

the prediction would be fulfilled—all old men now; and the body reappeared, as young as on the day he left them. So Scott and his comrades emerge out of the white immensities, always young.

Beauty "Boiling Over"

How comely a thing is affliction borne cheerfully, which is not beyond the reach of the humblest of us. What is beauty? It is these hard-bitten men singing courage to you from their tent; it is the waves of their island home crooning of their deeds to you who are to follow them. Sometimes beauty boils over, and then spirits are abroad. Ages may pass as we look or listen, for time is annihilated. There is a very old Norwegian legend told to me by Nansen, the explorer—I like best to be in the company of explorers—the legend of a monk who had wandered into the fields and a lark began to sing. He had never heard a lark before, and he stood there entranced until the bird and its song had become part of the heavens. Then he went back to the monastery, and found there a doorkeeper whom he did not know and who did not know him. Other monks came and they were all strangers to him. He told them he was Father Anselm, but that was no help. Finally, they looked up the books of the monastery and these revealed that there had been a Father Anselm there a hundred or more years before. Time had been blotted out while he listened to the lark.

That, I suppose, was a case of beauty boiling over—or a soul boiling over, perhaps the same thing. Then spirits walk. They must sometimes walk at St. Andrews. I don't mean the ghosts of queens or prelates, but one that keeps step, as soft as snow, with some poor student. He sometimes catches sight of it. That is why his fellows can never quite touch him, their best beloved; he half knows something of which they know nothing, the secret that is hidden in the face of the "Mona Lisa." Life is so beautiful to him that its proportions are monstrous. Perhaps his childhood may have been overfull of gladness. They don't like that. If the Seekers were kind he is the one for whom the flags of his college would fly one day. But the Seeker I am thinking of is unfriendly, and so our student is "the lad that will never be old." He often gaily forgets, and thinks he has slain his foe by daring him, like him who, dreading water, was always

the first to leap into it. One can see him serene astride a Scotch cliff, singing to the sun the farewell thanks of a boy:

> Throned on a cliff serene Man saw the sun
> Hold a red torch above the farthest seas,
> And the fierce island pinnacles put on
> In his defence their sombre panoplies;
> Foremost the white mists eddied, trailed, and spun,
> Like seekers, emulous to clasp his knees,
> Till all the beauty of the scene seemed one
> Led by the secret whispers of the breeze.
> The sun's torch suddenly flashed upon his face
> And died; and he sat content in subject night
> And dreamed of an old dead foe that had sought and found him.
> A beast stirred boldly in its resting-place
> And the cold came; Man rose to his master-height,
> Shivered and turned away; but the mists were round him.

If there is any of you here so rare that the Seekers have taken an ill-will to him, like the boy who wrote those lines, I ask you to be careful. Henley says in that poem we were speaking of:

> "Under the bludgeonings of Chance
> My head is bloody but unbowed."

A fine mouthful, but perhaps "My head is bloody and bowed" is better.

Gay Courage

Let us get back to that tent with its songs and cheery conversation. Courage! I don't think it is to be got by your becoming solemnsides before your time. You must have been warned against letting the golden hours slip by. Yes, but some of them are only golden because we let them slip. Diligence—ambition; noble words, but only if "touched to fine issues." Prizes may be dross, learning lumber, unless they bring you into the arena with increased understanding. Look to it that what you are doing is not merely toddling to a competency. "Happy," it has been said by a distinguished man, "is he who can leave college with an unreproaching conscience and an unsullied heart." I don't know. He sounds to me like a sloppy, watery sort of fellow. Happy perhaps, but if there be red blood in him impossible. Don't be disheartened by ideals of perfection which can only be achieved by those who run away. Nature, that "thrifty goddess," never gave you "the smallest sample of her excellence" for that. You may have heard from your Betters that the pains and dolours of

Youth are but amusing miniatures of what grey-heads go through. Don't you believe it. Whatever bludgeonings may be in store for you, I think one feels more poignantly at your age than ever again in life.

All Goes, If Courage Goes

Courage is the thing. All goes if courage goes! The greatness of a people is founded on their moral principles; but what says our Johnson of courage: "Unless a man has that virtue he has no security for preserving any other." Be not merely courageous, but light-hearted, also gay. Some people have odd ideas of what gaiety is. There is an officer who was the first of our army to land at Gallipoli. He was dropped overboard to light decoys on the shore, so as to deceive the Turks as to where the landing was to be. He pushed a raft containing those in front of him. It was a frosty night, and he was naked and painted black. Firing from the ships was going on all around. It was a two hours' swim in pitch darkness. He did it, crawled through the scrub to listen to the talk of the enemy, who were so near that he could have shaken hands with them—lit his decoys and swam back. He seems to look on this as a gay affair. He is a V. C. now, and you wouldn't think to look at him that he could ever have presented such a disreputable appearance. Would you? (Colonel Freyberg.) Those men of whom I have been speaking as the kind to "fill the fife" could all be light-hearted on occasion.

I remember Scott by highland streams trying to rouse me by maintaining that haggis is boiled bagpipes. Henley in dispute as to whether say, Turgenieff or Tolstoi could hang the other on his watch chain, sometimes clenched the argument by casting his crutch at you. Stevenson responded in the same gay spirit by giving that crutch to John Silver; you remember with what adequate results. You must cultivate this light-heartedness if you are to hang your Betters on your watch chains. Dr. Johnson—let us have him again—does not seem to have discovered in his travels that the Scots are a light-hearted nation. Boswell took him to task for saying that the death of Garrick had eclipsed the gaiety of nations. "Well, sir," Johnson said, "there may be occasions when it is permissible to," &c. But Boswell would not let go. "I cannot see, sir, how it could in any case have eclipsed the gaiety of nations, as England was the only nation before whom he had ever played." Johnson

was really stymied, but you would never have known it. "Well, sir," he said, holing out, "I understand that Garrick once played in Scotland, and if Scotland has any gaiety to eclipse, which, sir, I deny—"

Prove Johnson Wrong for Once

Prove Johnson wrong for once at the Student's Union and in your other societies. I much regret that there was no Student's Union at Edinburgh in my time. I hope you are fairly noisy and that members are sometimes led out. Don't forget to speak scornfully of the Victorian age; there will be lots of time to repent when you know it better. Very soon you will be Victorian or that sort of things yourself; next session, probably, when the freshmen come up. Make merry while you may. Yet light-heartedness is not for ever and a day. "You seize the flower, its bloom is shed." At its best it is the gay companion of innocence; and when innocence goes—as go it must—they soon trip off together, looking for something younger. But courage comes all the way—

> "Fight on, my men," says Sir Andrew Barton,
> "I am hurt, but I am not slaine,
> I'll lie me down and bleed awhile,
> And then I'll rise and fight againe."

Another piece of advice—almost my last—for reasons you may guess I must give this in a low voice. Beware of McConnachie. When I look in a mirror now it is his face I see. I speak with his voice, and you all know now what a voice it is. I once had a voice of my own, but nowadays I hear it only from far away, a melancholy, lonely, lost little pipe. I wanted to be an explorer, but he willed otherwise. You will all have your McConnachies luring you off the high road. Unless you are constantly on the watch you will find that he has slowly pushed you out of yourself and taken your place. He has rather done for me. I think in his youth he must somehow have guessed the future and been fleggit by it—flichtered from the nest like a bird—and so our eggs were left cold. He has clung to me, less from mischief than for companionship. I half like him and his penny whistle. With all his faults he is as Scotch as peat. He whispered to me just now that you elected him, not me, as your rector.

A Chosen Hour

A final passing thought. Were an old student given an hour in which to revisit the St. Andrews of his day, would he spend more than

half of it at lectures? He is more likely to be heard clattering up bare stairs in search of old companions. But if you could choose your hour from all the five hundred years of this seat of learning, wandering at your will from one age to another, how would you spend it? A fascinating theme; so many notable shades at once astir that St. Leonards and St. Mary's grow murky with them. Hamilton, Melville, Sharpe, Chalmers, down to Herkless, that distinguished Principal, ripe scholar and warm friend, the loss of whom I deeply deplore with you. I think if that hour were mine, and though at St. Andrews he was but a passer-by, I would give a handsome part of it to a walk with Doctor Johnson. I should like to have the time of day passed to me in twelve languages by the Admirable Crichton. A wave of the hand to Andrew Lang; and then for the archery butts with the gay Montrose, all a-ruffled and ringed, and in the gallant St. Andrews' student manner, continued as I understand to this day, scattering largess as he rides along.

But where is now the courtly troupe
That once went riding by?
I miss the curls of Canteloupe,
The laugh of Lady Di.

We have still left time for a visit to a house in South-street, hard by St. Leonards, I don't mean the house you mean. I am a Knox man. But little will that avail, for McConnachie is a Queen Mary man. So, after all, it is at her door we chap, a last futile effort to bring that woman to heel. One more house of call, a student's room, also in South-street. I think No. 91. I have chosen my student, you see, and I have chosen well; him that sang:

Life has not since been wholly vain
And now I bear
Of wisdom plucked from joy and pain
Some slender share.

But howsoever rich the store,
I'd lay it down,
To feel upon my back once more
The old red gown.

Fight on Till the Whistle Blows

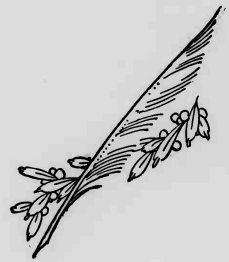
Well, we have at last come to an end. Some of you may remember when I began this address; we are all older now. I thank you for your patience. This is my first and last public appearance, and I never could

or would have made it, except to a gathering of Scottish students. If I have concealed my emotions in addressing you, it is only the thraun national way that deceives everybody except Scotsmen. I have not been as dull as I could have wished to be; but, looking at your glowing faces, cheerfulness and hope would keep breaking through. Despite the imperfections of your Betters we leave you a great inheritance, for which others will one day call you to account. You come of a race of men the very wind of whose name has swept to the ultimate seas. Remember—

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for ourselves . . .

Mighty are the universities of Scotland, and they will prevail. But even in your highest exultations never forget that they are not four but five. The greatest of them is the poor proud homes you come out of, which said so long ago: "There shall be education in this land." She, not St. Andrews, is the oldest university in Scotland, and all the others are her whelps.

In bidding you good-by, my last words must be of the lovely virtue. Courage, my children, and "greet the unseen with a cheer." "Fight on, my men," said Sir Andrew Barton. Fight on—you—for the old red gown till the whistle blows.



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